

# ACS Summer Sun Safety

## American Cancer Society Sun Smarts: Stay Safe in the Sun This Summer

Ah, summer – the days are longer and warmer, which means you have more time to get outside and do the activities you enjoy. Spending time outdoors is part of an active, healthy life. However, as anyone who has ever had a sunburn knows, too much exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays is dangerous.



More than 1 million skin cancers are diagnosed each year in the United States. That's more than cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, colon, uterus, ovaries, and pancreas combined. The good news is that there is a lot you can do to protect yourself. Follow these practical steps -- they provide the best protection when used together.

### **Limit direct sun exposure during midday.**

UV rays are most intense during the middle of the day, usually between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm. Plan your outdoor activities outside that timeframe, if possible.

### **Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps.**

Tanning lamps give out UVA and frequently UVB rays, as well. Both UVA and UVB rays can cause serious long-term skin damage, and both contribute to skin cancer.

**Wear shades and a hat.** Invest in a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and a pair of wrap-around sunglasses with at least 99% UV absorption.

**Use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.** The SPF number represents the level of protection against UVB rays, the kind that cause most skin cancers. A higher number means more protection. Sunscreens labeled "broad spectrum" also protect against UVA rays, which also play a role in skin cancer.

Use 1 ounce of sunscreen (a "palmful") to cover your arms, legs, neck, and face. Reapply every 2 hours -- more often if you are swimming or sweating. Don't forget to protect your lips by using a lip balm with SPF, too. And don't skip the sunscreen just because it looks overcast outside: UV light still comes through on hazy days.

**Check your skin.** Check your own skin regularly, and have your doctor check it, too -- especially if you notice any moles that have changed size, shape, or color. Skin cancer is most easily treated if found early. Hear from some survivors in this skin cancer prevention and early detection video.

**Celebrate "Don't Fry Day."** Remind your friends and family about the importance of skin cancer prevention and early detection on the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention's "Don't Fry Day," the Friday before Memorial Day, May 28, 2010.

To learn more about how you can reduce your risk of skin cancer, visit [cancer.org](http://cancer.org).